

Youth Suicide Risk Prevention for Educators

Presented by:

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Special Issues in Youth Suicide Prevention



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Factors Linked With Increased Youth Suicidality

- Impulsivity and Aggression
- Recent Sexual Victimization
- Criminogenic Behavior
- Ineffective Problem Solving and Coping Skills
- Bullying & Physical Victimization
- Being in an Emotionally or Physically Abusive Relationship
- Relationship Troubles
- Feeling Highly Stressed
- Feelings of Loneliness or Social Isolation



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Alcohol-Suicide Link

- Teens who drink before 13 years old more likely to have suicidal behavior
- Recent studies indicated:
 - High school students who engaged in binge drinking in the past month were significantly more likely to have attempted suicide in last year
 - Near lethal suicide attempts 700% higher for those who consumed alcohol in 3 hours prior to attempt
 - 50% of suicide victims had consumed some alcohol before the attempt
 - 25% of suicide victims were intoxicated at time of death
 - College students with thoughts of suicide were significantly more likely to engage in binge drinking



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Peer Victimization (Bullying) and Suicide

- Victims of bullies have higher rates of depression
- Bullying victims have lower rates of self-esteem than non-victims
- Victims of bullies have high rates of suicidal ideation (compared to non-victims)
- Suicide risk increases as the frequency and type of bullying increases



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Suicide & GLBTQ Youth



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GLBTQ Youth & Education

- 97% of public school students report hearing homophobic remarks from their peers
- 84% of GLBTQ youth report being verbally harassed at school
- 39% of GLBTQ report being physically attacked (punched, kicked or injured with a weapon)
 - *55% of transgendered youth report being physically attacked*
- 36% of GLBTQ youth report hearing homophobic remarks by school staff
- Less than 20% of school guidance counselors have training on serving GLBTQ youth
- 28% of gay students will drop out of school – more than 3x national average for heterosexual students
- One study indicated 22% of gay respondents reported skipping school in the last month because they felt unsafe there



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GLBTQ Youth Facts

- 26% of gay adolescent males were forced to leave home as a result of their sexual identity
- GLBTQ youth have a 10-30% higher than average incidence of using tobacco, alcohol and other drugs
 - Also higher rates of legal conflicts, psychiatric hospitalization and prostitution
- Less than 20% of school guidance counselors have training on serving GLBTQ youth



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GLBTQ Youth & Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors

- 3x-5x more likely to attempt suicide
- GLBTQ who self-identify but have not disclosed this information to others at higher risk
 - 1/3 of GLBTQ suicide attempts occurred within one-year
 - most of those shortly after self-identification
- 30% of gay and lesbian youth reported attempting suicide at least once
- Transsexuals are at even higher risk than homosexuals and much higher than general population



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DID YOU KNOW...

- Wyoming was one of 42 states which received a grade of “F” in the 2004 *State of States Report*, issued by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN).
 - Overall Wyoming scored 27/100 possible points
- The report pointed to the fact that Wyoming lacked statewide nondiscrimination and safe school laws that were sexual orientation and transgender inclusive, as well as had inadequate local safe schools policies that were inclusive of sexual identity issues



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Individual Conferences with At-Risk Youth

- Find privacy within the school setting; do not leave campus with at-risk youth
- Assure confidentiality: Within legal limits, assure student that what is said will remain confidential
- Maintain calm
- Validate the student's feelings; help them explore
- Be honest with yourself and about your own feelings
 - If this is not a subject you can discuss openly find someone who can
 - If you are uncomfortable with the issue find someone who isn't
- Explore Resources



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Correlation Between Self-Harm (e.g., cutting) and Suicide Death

- 5% will eventually die by suicide
- 15% are dead within 5 years of diagnosis (by all causes)

Link Between Suicide and Family History

INCREASED RISK TO DIE BY SUICIDE IF:

- Family History of Suicidal Behavior
- Family History of Suicide
- Parental psychopathology
 - *Higher even if not aware of family history*

SafeTALK Training Program



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imagine...

a suicide-safer community



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suicide alertness for everyone



This **suicide alertness** training program can help you:

- **identify** persons with thoughts of suicide
- **connect** persons with thoughts of suicide to suicide first aid resources





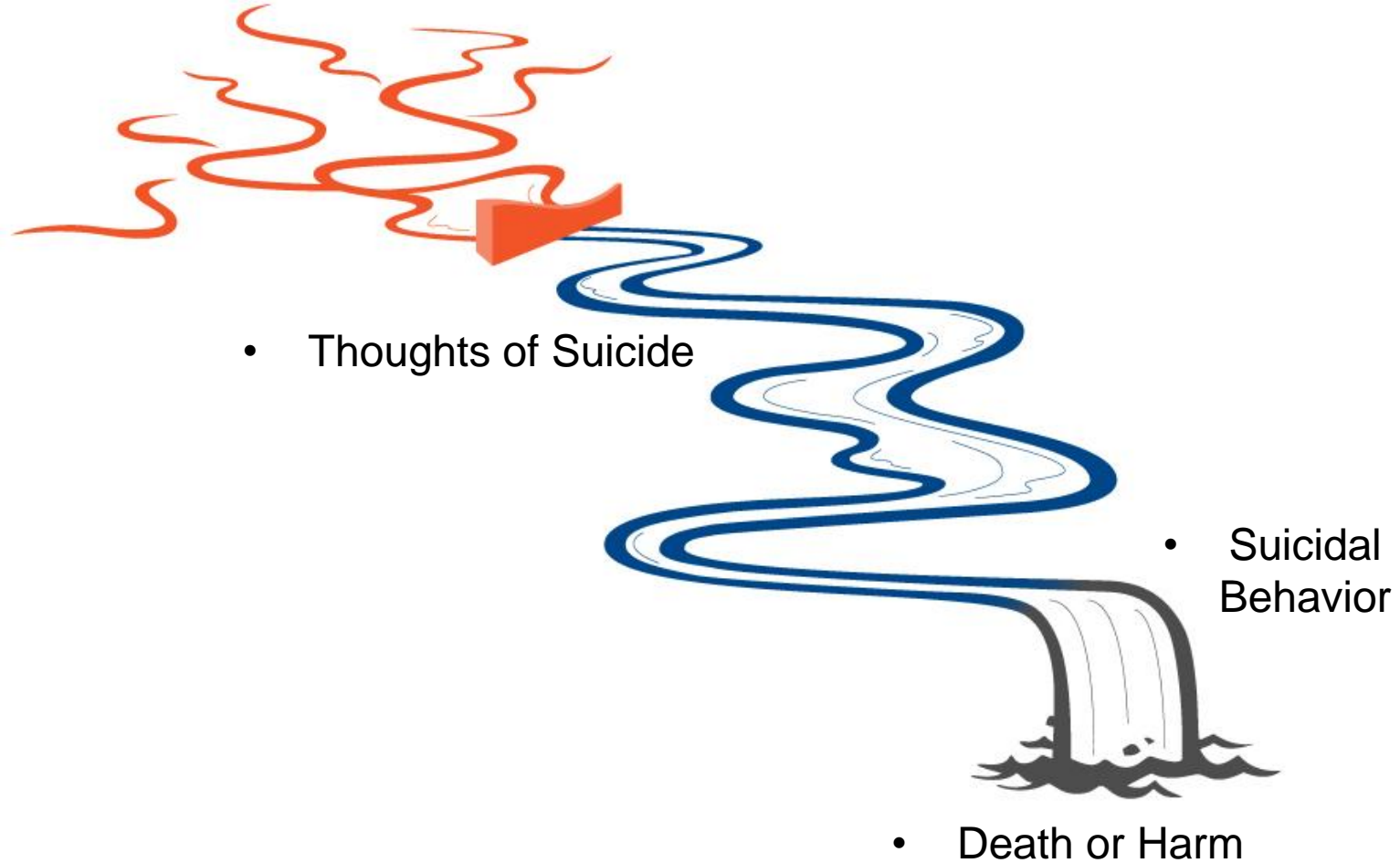
“

We are concerned about the safety of our friends and family members. We want to be more alert to the risk of suicide. We want to respond quickly when someone might be at risk of suicide. Use the steps that this program teaches and you may help save a life.

This is a tough subject, but
suicide is everyone's business.

”

“Contributaries” of Suicide (no thoughts of suicide)

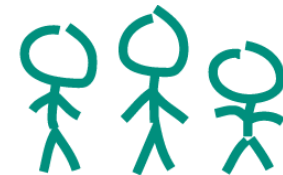


- **PREVENTION**
- Important but unlikely to prevent all
- people from having thoughts of suicide



- **INTERVENTION**

- Suicide First Aid to prevent
- the risk of suicidal behavior



- **POSTVENTION**
- For those who injure themselves
- and those who are affected



Region:

Wyoming

Year:

1999-2005

Population:

499,189 (annual average population)

Reported suicides:

656

Rate:

18.77 per 100,000 population

Unreported suicides: 5% to 25% more suicides

Non-fatal suicidal behaviors: 40 to 100 times greater than number of suicides

Number of people affected: Each suicidal behavior may affect a few or a very large number

People with thoughts of suicide: 1 out of 20 people in any given week

03 Magnitude of the Problem



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“What is the Difference Between Suicide Alertness and Suicide First Aid?”



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02 Suicide Alert and ASIST helpers



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03a Any one in twenty may have thoughts of suicide



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Suicidal Thoughts Cannot be Stopped ...



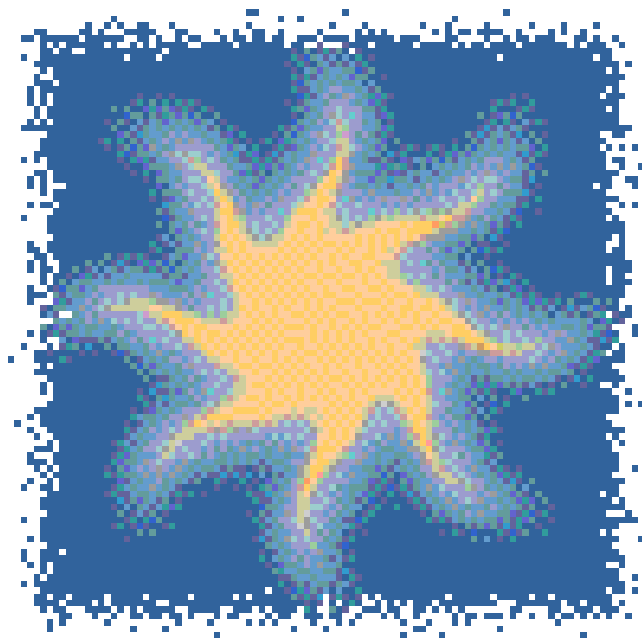
Suicidal Ideation v. Suicidal Behavior



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... Suicidal Behaviors Can Be



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04 You might be wondering...



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Why Would Someone Who
Really Wants to Die Let
Another Person Know About
Their Intentions?



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“Part of me wants to die, but
part of me wants to live.”



If there wasn't a part of them that wanted to live, you
wouldn't be having the conversation ...

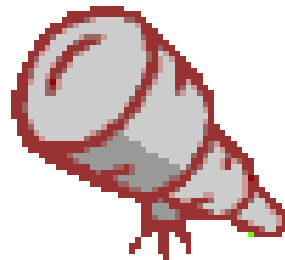


03b Others likely want to help



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Unless Those Who Want to Help are **Alert**
to Suicide Clues They will Miss, Dismiss or
Avoid the Opportunity to Help



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suicide alertness for everyone



Tell
Ask
Listen
KeepSafe



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Tell Ask Listen **KeepSafe**



Tell

Tell if you are
having thoughts
of suicide

Tell someone in
the clearest way
you can





07.1 I am Telling you.



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REASONS WHY PEOPLE DON'T TELL ABOUT THEIR SUICIDAL FEELINGS:

- Uncertain of Reaction
- Previous Attempts to Tell Have Been Missed, Dismissed, Avoided
- Afraid of Being Condemned
- Might be Punished (lose job, lose custody, lose freedom)
- Embarrassed to Let Others Know
- Afraid to Appear Weak
- Don't Want to Burden Others
- Might be Uncertain About Accepting Help
- Might Not be Treated With Respect



07.2 You just aren't getting it.



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04 You might be wondering...



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“... Aren’t People Who Are
Inviting Help Less Suicidal
Than Those Who Do Not Tell?”



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ANSWER.

**No. All Suicidal Invitations
Should Be Treated As
Equally Serious.**



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Tell Ask Listen **KeepSafe**

ACTIONS

- care-less
- moody
- withdrawing
- alcohol/drug misuse

**SEE
ACTIONS**

08.1 Invitations: What we SEE



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What Other Kinds of Things Can we See That Might Make Us Concerned

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

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Tell Ask Listen **KeepSafe**

TALK

- alone
- burden
- no purpose
- escape

**HEAR
TALK**

08.2 Invitations: What we HEAR



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What Other Kinds of Things Can we HEAR That Might Make Us Concerned

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

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Tell Ask Listen **KeepSafe**

FEELINGS

- desperate
- hopeless
- numb
- ashamed

**SENSE
FEELINGS**

08.3 Invitations: What we SENSE



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What Other Kinds of Things Can we SENSE That Might Make Us Concerned

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

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Tell Ask Listen **KeepSafe**

LIFE
SITUATIONS

- abuse
- rejection
- losses
- suicide experience

LEARN
LIFE
SITUATIONS

08.4 Invitations: What we LEARN about



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Tell

SEE actions
HEAR talk
SENSE feelings
LEARN life situations

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Tell **Ask** Listen **KeepSafe**



When someone is depressed or feeling hopeless they are sometimes thinking about suicide. **Are you thinking about suicide?**



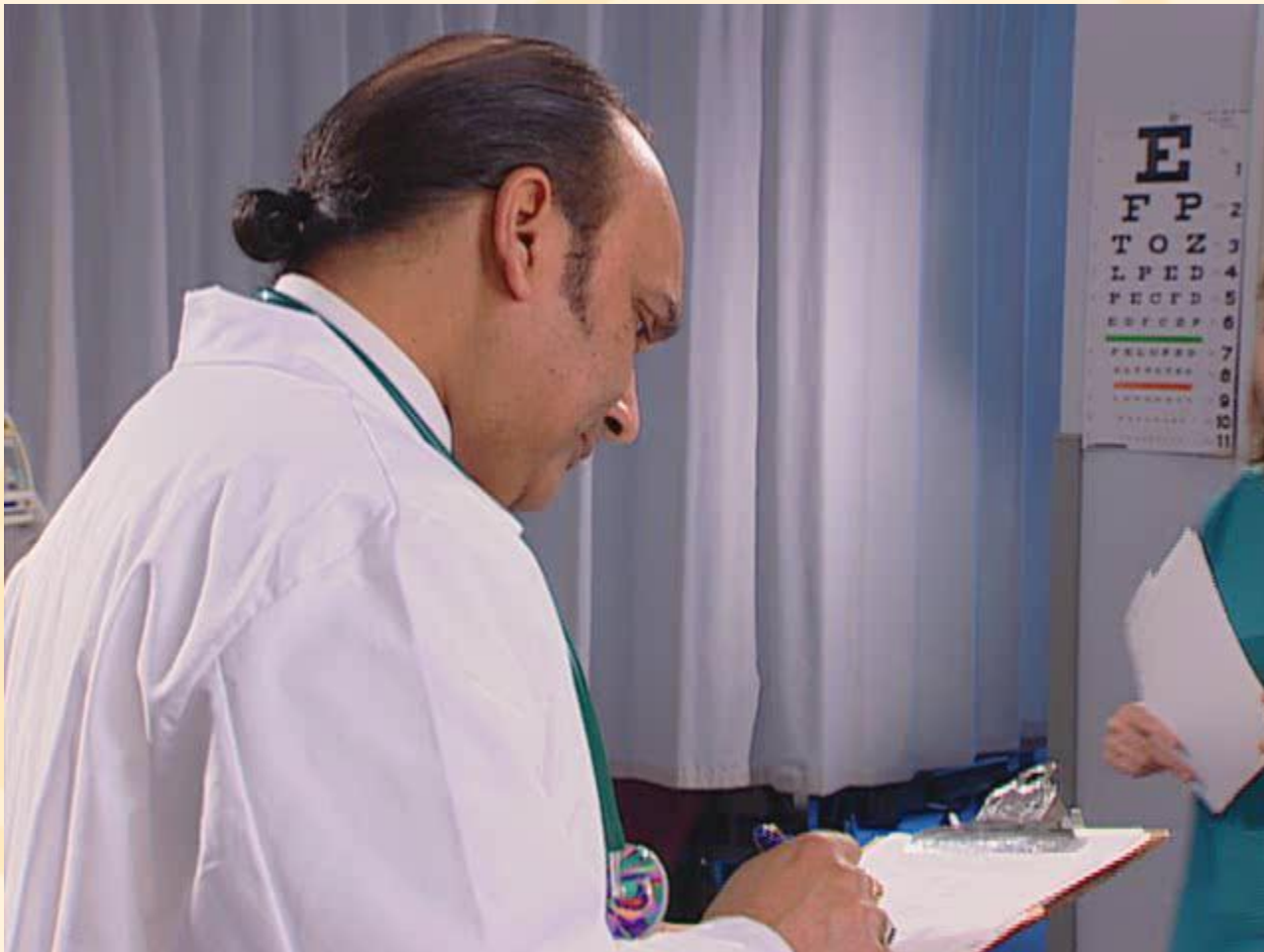


Scene 1



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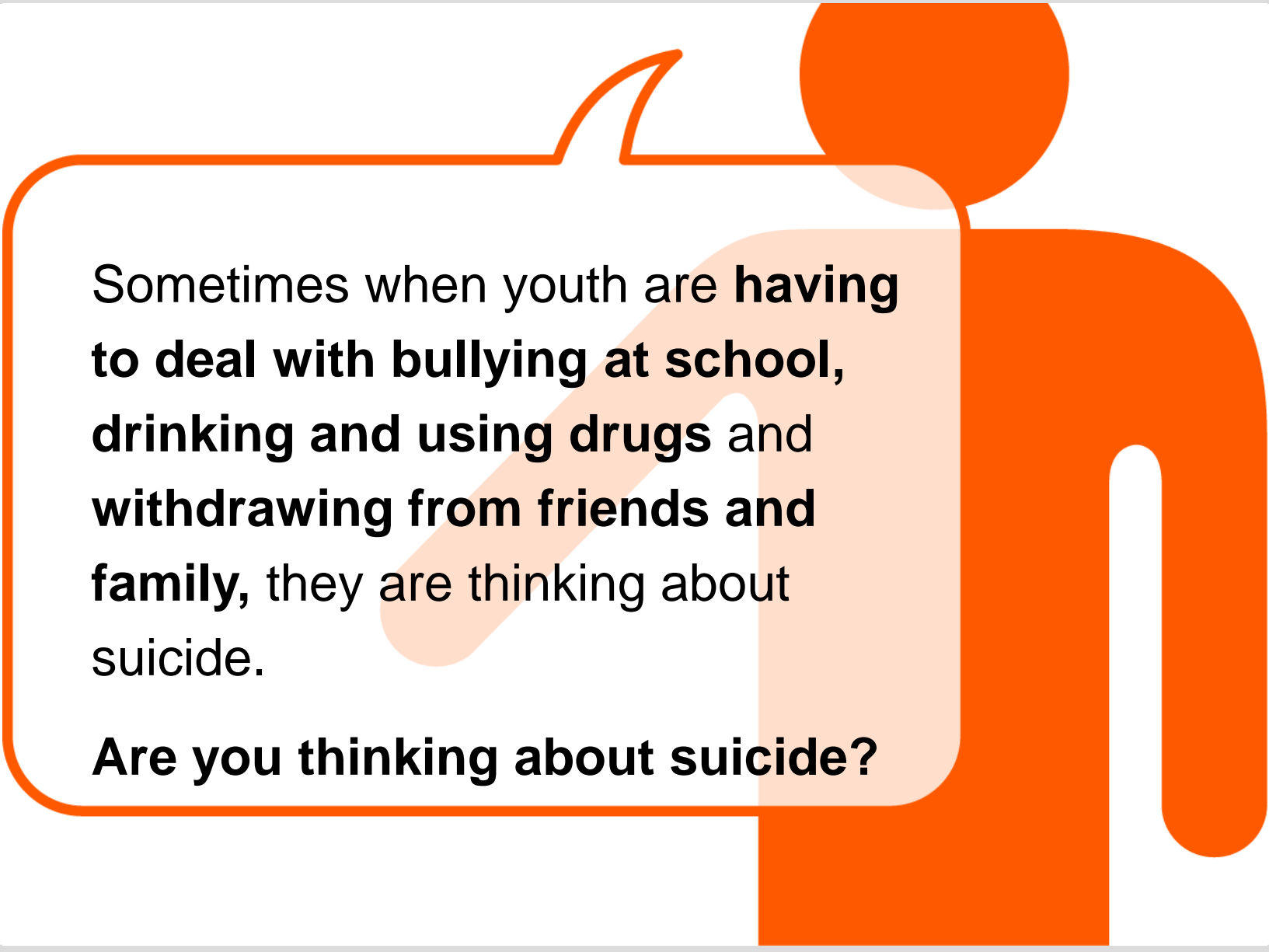


What is the Best Way to Ask About Suicidal Thoughts?



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A large, stylized orange figure of a person is positioned on the right side of the slide. A speech bubble, outlined in orange, originates from the figure's head area and points towards the left, containing the main text. The figure is composed of a solid orange head and a larger, slightly transparent orange body.

Sometimes when youth are **having to deal with bullying at school, drinking and using drugs and withdrawing from friends and family**, they are thinking about suicide.

Are you thinking about suicide?

**“Why is it Important For
You as a Caregiver to
Be the One to Ask
About Suicide?”**



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04 You might be wondering...



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“What if They Answer In
a Way That is Unclear
or You Don’t Believe?”



04 You might be wondering...



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“Won’t Asking Someone
About Suicide Put the Idea
Into Their Head?”





04 You might be wondering...



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“What if My Becoming
Aware of How to Recognize
Suicidal Thoughts and to
Ask Directly About Suicide
Causes a Student Trouble
at Home or Results in Their
Institutionalization?”



10 Listening



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Tell Ask Listen KeepSafe



Let's TALK about this.
I am **Listening**.
... This is important.



Patiently Listen to...

Reasons for Dying

Persistently Listen for...

Reasons for Living



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04 You might be wondering...



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“What if They Don’t Have
Anything to Say?
or
What if They Won’t Stop Talking?”

“What are the Skills of a Good Listener?”



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Not helpful

- judgmental
- angry
- negative
- panicked
- advice giving
- impatient

Unhelpful characteristics



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Helpful

- sensitive
- caring
- direct
- calm
- non-judgmental
- patient



Helpful characteristics



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Helping the Person At-Risk Find Hope



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Things
that sustain
my life

health

work

goals

responsibilities

things to
do in the
future

friends

hobbies,
recreations

financial
security

family

mental
health/medical
supports

coping
skills/
resiliency

faith/
hope

religion

Resources that sustain life



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Help the person at risk complete the following:

*I could make one of my life-sustaining things even **more protective** or make better use of it by...*

Making life-sustaining things more protective



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04 You might be wondering...



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“What if They Don’t
Think the Situation is
Serious?”

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Tell Ask Listen **KeepSafe**



We need extra help.
I want to connect you
with someone who can
help you **KeepSafe**.





A **KeepSafe** connection is:

- **Available:** there when needed
- **Approachable:** accepts connections from alert helper
- **Able:** can increase safety





Now is **not** the time to solve all of the problems.



Now is the time to do something that keeps the person with thoughts safe.



KeepSafe from means that might be used to harm themselves.



Do **not** promise secrecy.



suicide...

SUICIDE

SUICIDE

16 Connecting with an intervention resource



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Keep[^]yourself Safe

Never put yourself in danger.
Get or call for help instead.

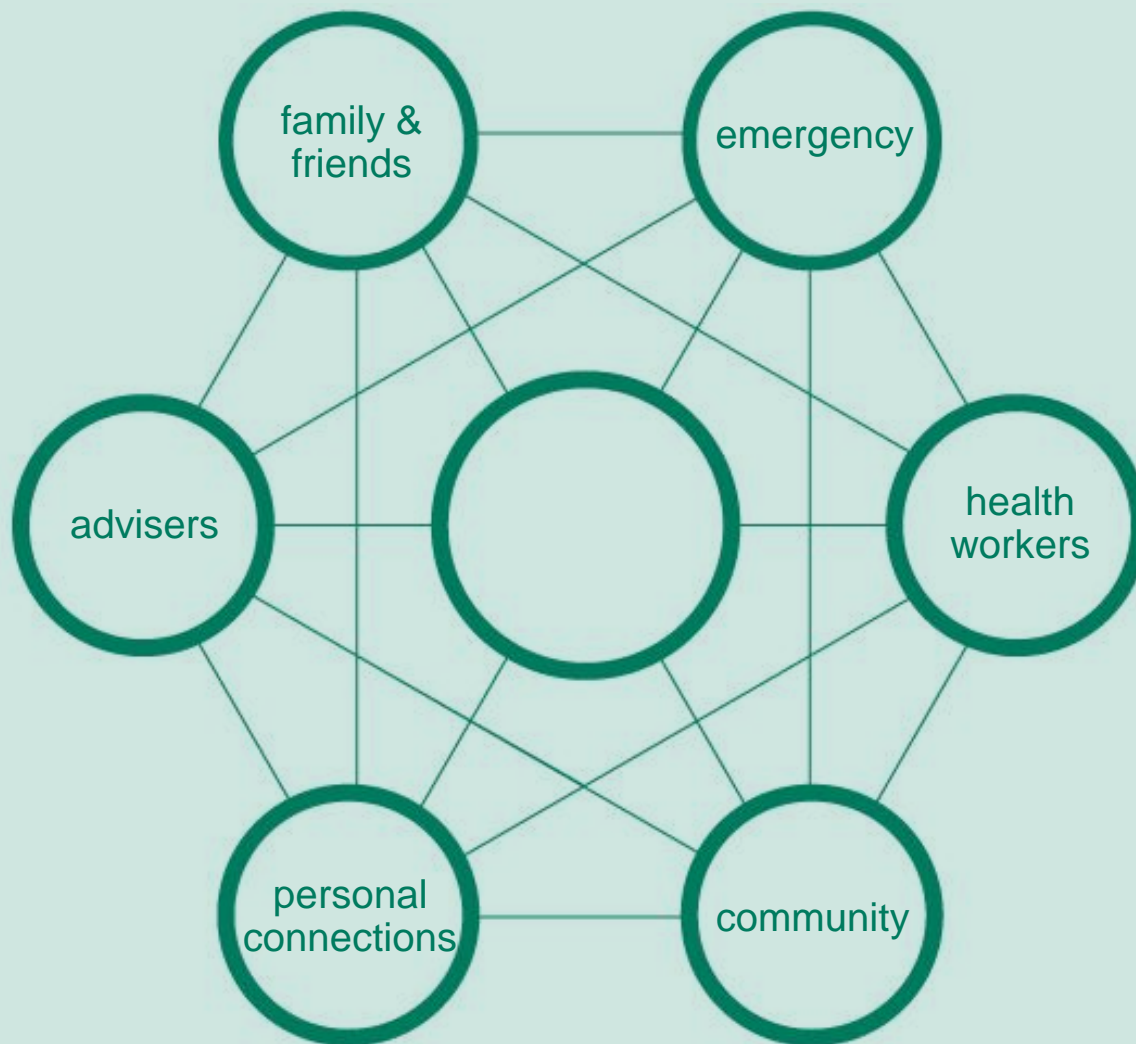
Informal Resources

Formal Resources

24-hour

Longer-term

Life-long



KeepSafe connections

State of Wyoming Suicide Prevention Initiative

c/o Keith Hotle – Suicide Prevention Team Leader

Wyoming Department of Health

Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services

keith.hotle@health.wyo.gov

(307) 777-3318

WY Suicide Prevention Website:

<http://wdh.state.wy.us/mhsa/prevention/suicideindex.html>

WY Mental Health Providers Website:

<http://wdh.state.wy.us/mhsa/treatment/MHprovidermap.html>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-TALK





04 You might be wondering...



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“What if You Try to Help
and They Kill
Themselves Anyway?”

PERSON
WITH
THOUGHTS
OF SUICIDE

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Tell Ask Listen KeepSafe

PERSON
WHO
WANTS
TO HELP

INVITATIONS

Tell

as clearly
and directly
as possible

Ask

When someone is [INVITATIONS], they are sometimes thinking about suicide. Are you thinking about suicide?

Listen

Let's TALK about this. I am Listening.
... This is important.

KeepSafe

We need extra help. I want to connect you with someone who can help you KeepSafe.





04 You might be wondering...



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“Since all of This Seems
Like Common Sense Why
do So Many People Fall
Through the Cracks?”

Miss

not recognize

Dismiss

not take seriously

Avoid

keep away from

Miss

- don't connect with suicide
- don't consider the possibility of suicide

Dismiss

- invitations mean the person is not serious
- suicide is so rare
- only certain kinds of people
- only people acting very strangely

Avoid

- make it worse
- don't know what to do
- too scared to help; too scared to “catch” suicide
- don't want to interfere/don't want responsibility/someone else will do it
- have my own troubles (overwhelmed, own thoughts of suicide, burned out)



Miss

- don't connect with suicide
- don't consider the possibility of suicide

Dismiss

- invitations mean the person is not serious
- suicide is so rare
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Avoid

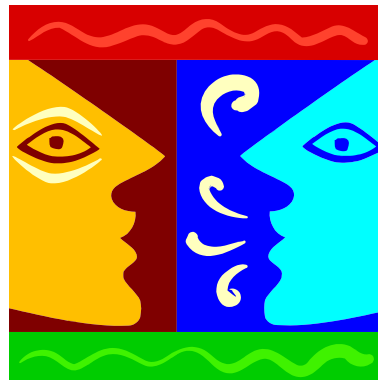
- make it worse
- don't know what to do
- too scared to help; too scared to “catch” suicide
- don't want to interfere; don't want responsibility; someone else will do it
- have my own troubles (overwhelmed, own thoughts of suicide, burned out)

Discussion:

What did the Mom do Wrong?

Did She Miss, Dismiss, or Avoid?

What Could She Have Done to Prevent a Possible Tragedy?



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“Does a Brief
Intervention Always
Happen That Fast?”

“Can Asking be Helpful Even When There Turns Out to Be No Risk of Suicide?”

“Does it Hurt or Help The Relationship?”

“Does it Provide the Caregiver With Some Level of Comfort?”



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The Importance of Being “Nosey” and the Limits of Alertness



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“What if Someone is
Hostile or Evasive?
Isn't it Better Not to
Interfere?”



KeepSafe connections & Wallet Card

State of Wyoming Suicide Prevention Initiative

c/o Keith Hotle – Suicide Prevention Team Leader

Wyoming Department of Health

Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services

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National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-TALK



SafeTALK Sticker



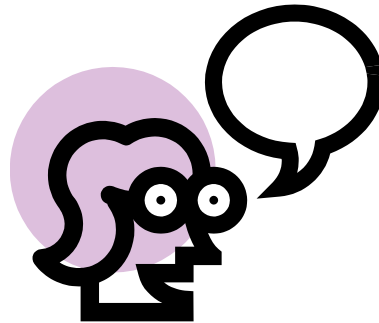
21 Put this sticker somewhere where others can see it



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QUESTIONS?



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imagine...

a suicide-safer community